



GATES CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY of the INLAND EMPIRE -

Since 1959



OPEN GATES - AUGUST, 2026

NEXT MEETING: August 14, 2026 - DOORS OPEN 6:00 PM

2026 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Jeffrey Loew

Greetings Gates!

I hope everyone is staying cool this summer! We are in the full swing of summer heat. Make sure both you AND your plants stay hydrated.

Our August speaker is Mark Fryer.

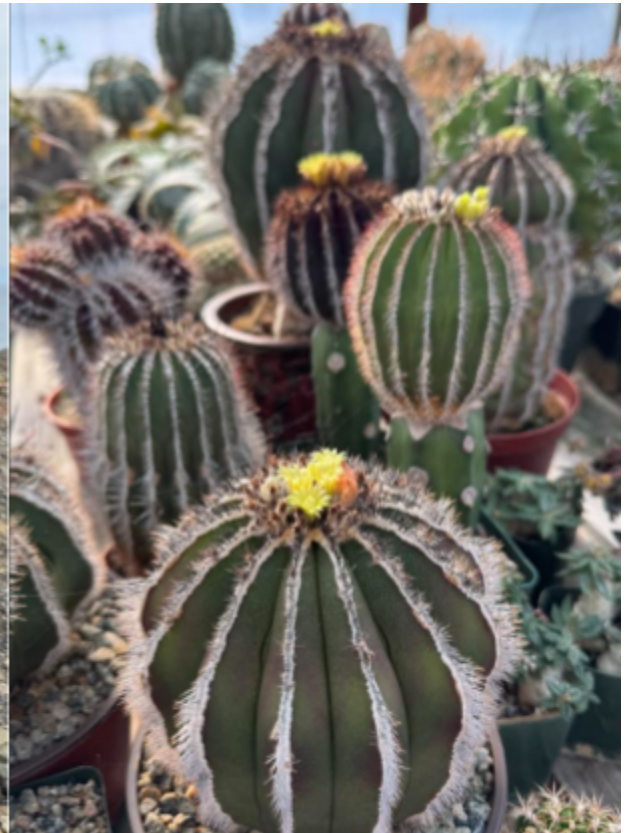
See you all Friday, August 14th. Doors open at 6PM.

Jeffrey Loew

President, Gates CSS

MONTHLY SPEAKER FOR AUGUST - Mark Fryer

Speaker Biography: Mark Fryer





Mark Fryer is currently the Cactus Production Manager at Western Cactus in Vista, California. Previously, Mark worked at C&J Cactus Nursery in Vista as a lead propagator, after a couple decades as a dedicated hobbyist trying to build a reference collection of *Echinocereus* and *Opuntia* while living in Oregon and occasionally working with Rare Plant Research, the Oregon Cactus and Succulent Society, and various horticultural entities from the early 1980s until he moved to Southern California in 2000. Mark is currently a “Fellow” of the San Diego Cactus and Succulent Society after holding two terms as President and is a Life Member of the CSSA.

Program Description: “A View From the Bench”

“A View From the Bench” is Mark’s presentation on growing cacti and succulent plants from seed to flower, and back again. Western Cactus has always been committed to automating processes, and that is a large part of what attracted him to come to work there.

Mark will discuss and present some of the processes that help insure a reliably consistent plant, and how those processes can be translated into even the smallest windowsill collections. Mark also enjoys hybridizing and selecting on numerous cacti species and cultivars.





AUGUST 2026 - MINI-SHOW

Cactus: Melocactus; Discocactus

Succulent: Claudiciform; Pachycaul

Melocactus and Discocactus by Tom Glavich

A *Melocactus* was very likely the first cactus seen by a European explorer, and certainly one of the first to be brought back and successfully grown. They were known in English collections by the late 16th century, less than 60 years after Columbus' first voyage. It's likely that he or other early explorers also brought back some *Opuntia*, and much more likely that the *Opuntia* survived.

Melocactus are immediately recognizable by the large cephalium that develops on mature plants. *Melocactus* grow as normal appearing but flowerless globular cacti until they reach maturity. This can take from 6 to 15 years in cultivation, with a greater range in habitat. Once they reach maturity the body stops growing vigorously (it still grows slowly). Most of the plant energy goes into producing a cylindrical flowering and fruiting structure known as a cephalium. This is usually white with short hairs of yellow, orange or red. As the years go by the cephalium becomes more cylindrical with the base becoming more colorful. The flowers are usually a red-purple and the fruits are almost always a bright red to attract birds. With age the cephalium can grow to 18 inches or more in height, occasionally bifurcating or trifurcating.

Melocactus are native to a large region, Brazil to Southern Mexico including a good part of the Caribbean. As might be expected cacti from the tropical regions particularly coastal regions are sensitive to cold and wet. Cold and wet conditions can cause scarring of the body which usually appears as brown or tan lesions on the skin. A few of these are unavoidable but a badly scared plant quickly becomes unsightly. At the same time almost all of the *Melocactus* expect high humidity and a higher moisture level than might be



expected. Many grow within sight of the ocean or in some of the more tropical and humid regions of Brazil. They like water but demand good drainage.

Melocactus are generally solitary so the only means of propagation is through seeds. Fortunately, they produce plenty of seed and these germinate readily especially when the weather is warm. Keep the seedlings protected from direct sun and moist until fairly large. Although it is several years from seed to a flowering plant most of the *Melocactus* have magnificent spination and vividly colored bodies which make keeping them a pleasant task.

Discocactus are another genus of mostly tropical cacti. They come from Brazil and Paraguay stretching into Bolivia. They grow at higher altitudes than *Melocactus*. Most of the species grow cephalia. They are generally smaller than *Melocactus*. There are about 25 currently accepted species.

Magnificent *Melocactus* and *Discocactus*

Melocactus azureus can vary in color from gray to green, but almost all of the plants in cultivation live up to the species name. They are bright blue. This species when mature with a rusty red cephalium crowned with a white top and bright red fruits is always a show stopper. From Bahia, Brazil, it is also one of the easier species to grow.

Melocactus intortus is a species from the West Indies that becomes partly cylindrical with age sometimes reaching to 3 feet in habitat. The body is also nicely patterned, with the tubercles being more distinct than on most *Melocactus* and giving a distinct shape to the ribs.

Melocactus matanzanus is a species from Cuba. The cephalium has bright orange to reddish brown bristles. It stays small, rarely getting to more than a few inches tall. An interesting species from an island whose succulent plants are not well known.

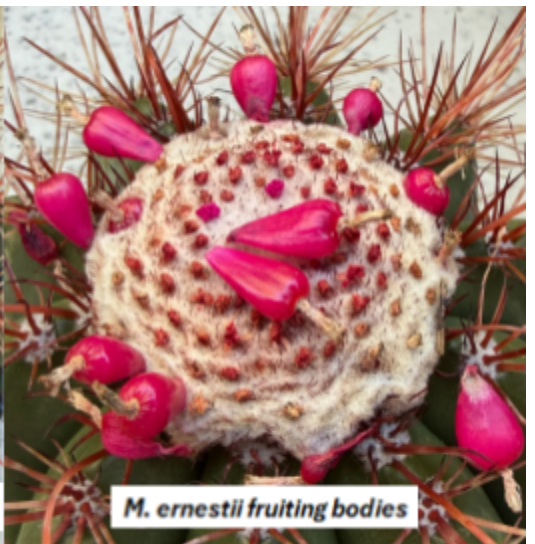
Melocactus oaxacensis is from Mexico, as the name implies. It is a dull green with a red cephalium. The cephalium tends to be brownish giving this a different appearance than many of the other species. The flowers are larger than many of the other species.



Melocactus paucispinus, another species from Bahia Brazil is subglobose to strongly depressed. (much wider than tall). This species has prominent gray-green ribs, long, fat, gray spines, and a small cephalium. Although not the showiest of the species, it is certainly one of the most interesting.

Melocactus violaceus is a dark green bodied species, usually small and subglobose. The spines are white, the fruit ranges from pale pink to lilac pink, giving the plant its name.

Discocactus horstii is often the most available and collectable. It has great tubercles often covered with white hairs and a good cephalium.





Caudiciform Succulents and Pachycauls by Tom Glavich

A caudex is generally accepted as a swollen stem or swollen root, or most often a combination of the two. There is no exact horticulturally accepted definition of the word caudex. Over the years it has been defined slightly differently by many authors.

A caudex is a swollen plant base that supports leaves and stems and sometimes flowers. It generally connects directly to roots but may be just an extension of a tap root. It differs from a root or tuber primarily by tolerating being above ground without rotting for extended periods. A caudiciform succulent is sometimes distinguished from a pachycaul (elephant like) succulent by being wider than taller, but this too is a vague definition.

Caudiciforms come in all sizes, from well under an inch to many feet in diameter. Cultivation requirements vary widely so few useful statements can be made. In general, caudiciforms come from sub-tropical and tropical climates, and can be damaged or killed by a freeze. They prefer rapidly draining soil mixes and do not tolerate excessive long-term wetness. A mix containing at least 80% pumice is a good start. They want food and water when growing and want to be kept dry when they are not.

Below are just a few examples of caudiciforms:

Fockea edulis, readily available, and easily grow from seed will become an impressive caudiciform when grown and regularly feed and repotted.

The genus *Euphorbia* has a wealth of Caudiciforms. *Euphorbia squarrosa*, which is easily grown and tolerant of a Southern California climate is one of the best. But there are many others in this family, particularly from Madagascar which deserve to be grown. The Madagascan species are more difficult, and less tolerant of cold. The South African species are easy, requiring only patience to develop large a large caudex.

Pachypodium is home to a few caudiciforms and many pachyforms. Shown with this article is *Pachypodium brevicaule ssp leucoxanthum* grafted on *Pachypodium lameri*.



Dioscorea elephantipes is a winter growing caudiciform. It is shown in its summer form, with all of the leaves and stems removed.

Regarding Pachycauls, we need to go back to Gordon Rowley's 1987 Book on Caudiciforms and Pachycauls to find a definition of the term Pachycaul as "...any tree or shrub whose trunk is abnormally thick." This is wonderfully vague, but we all know a Pachycaul when we see one. These are the classic "Fat Plants." They are trunks that store water for long periods of drought. The ones that most of us grow are Pachycaul shrubs or trees that get a bonsai treatment to make them portable.

The geographic range of Pachycauls includes every continent except Antarctica, making cultivation advice generally useless. However, these are all trees at heart and they will rapidly deplete the nutrients in potting mixes so frequent fertilization is a must for best growth and plant health. The Pachycauls from tropical climates, Mexico, South America, etc. Tend to do well in rapidly draining media. Some of the tropical species from Northern Africa, Madagascar, India and Arabia are very cold sensitive, while those from Mexico and Southern South Africa can take a few hours of freezing weather without any damage.

Some genera that are considered Pachycauls include: *Adenia*, *Adenium*, *Commiphora*, *Cyphostemma*, *Euphorbia* (some, but not most), *Ficus*, *Fouquieria*, *Pachycormus*, *Pachypodium*, *Sedum* (just one or two or three tree sedums), *Tylecodon*, *Uncarina*.

There are many others and isolated species in other non-Pachycaul families.





***Remember: You must be up-to-date on your membership dues to be eligible to compete in the monthly mini-show. See Phuc prior to submitting your plants to ensure you are current on membership.**

2026	ψ Gates Mini-Show Categories ψ	
	Cactus	Succulent
January	Mammillaria clusters	Aloe
February	Columnar	Miniature Agave
March	Notocactus, Parodia	Dudleya
April	Echinocactus, Ferocactus	Gasteria, Haworthia
May	Cancelled - 51 th Annual Gates Show & Sale	
June	Astrophytum	Pachypodium
July	Hybrids/ Cultivars	Hybrids/ Cultivars
August	Melocactus, Discocactus	Caudiciform, Pachycaul
September	Eriosyce	Aizoaceae (No Lithops)
October	Ariocarpus, Dead Plant	Crassula, Kalanchoe, Dead Plant
November	Miniatures	Miniatures
December	Cancelled - Gates Holiday Dinner	



TENTATIVE 2026 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

(Version# 4 - Subject to change based on updates from the below clubs)

AUG. 7-9: INTER-CITY SHOW & SALE

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Fri. (Sale only) 9am-6:30pm, Sat. & Sun. (Show & Sale) 9am-5pm

301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA 91007

(LA County Arboretum)

Info: www.intercityshow.com or call 909-624-3227

AUG. 21-23: SAN JOSE CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY SUMMER CACTUS & SUCCULENT FAIR

Fri. 6pm-9pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 9am-2pm

1380 Rosalia Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

(Peterson Middle School)

Info: www.csss.org

SEP. 4: HUNTINGTON BOTANICAL GARDENS SUCCULENT SYMPOSIUM

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

9am-3pm

1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA 91108

(Huntington Botanical Gardens)

Info: Reservations- www.huntington.org, Symposium-call 626-405-3504

SEP. 26-27: MONTEREY BAY AREA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY FALL SHOW & SALE

Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm

124 Atkinson Lane, Watsonville, CA 95076

(ISTW Portuguese Hall)

Info: mbacsspresident@gmail.com or mbsucculent.org

OCT. 4: LONG BEACH CACTUS CLUB ANNUAL AUCTION

1pm-3:30pm

9402 Oak St., Bellflower, CA 90706

(Women's Club of Bellflower)

Info: call 714-553-6914



**OCT. 4: CONEJO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
FALL SALE**

9AM-4PM

558 N. Ventu Park Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Info: www.conejocss.com or conejocss@hotmail.com

**OCT. 23-25: HUNTINGTON FALL PLANT SALE
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

10am-5pm

1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA 91108

(Huntington Botanical Gardens)

Info: Reservations - www.huntington.org, Sale - call 626-405-3571

**OCT. 24-25: PALOMAR CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
FALL SHOW & SALE**

San Diego Botanic Garden admission required

Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 10am-3pm

230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024

(San Diego Botanic Garden, Conservatory)

Info: rwkopfstein@gmail.com

**NOV. 13: LOS ANGELES CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
HOLIDAY SALE & AUCTION**

Sun. 10am-4pm Collectors LIVE Auction 12pm

18255 Victory Blvd., Reseda, CA 91335

(ONEGeneration Senior Center)

Info: www.lacactus.com

**TBD: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CACTUS & SUCCULENT ASSOCIATION
SPRING SHOW & SALE**

Sat. 8am-4pm, Sun. 8am-3pm, Sat. dinner & rare /specimen size plant auction

301 N. San Carlos Dr., Walnut Creek, CA 94598

(Heather Farm Community Center – Lakeside Room)

Info: norcalcsa@gmail.com or call 650-788-3188



ODDS AND ENDS

Odds & Ends: If you would like to post yard sales or any other updates/information that you believe would be of interest (pictures, plant sales, yard sales that include plants, events, etc) to our club members via this newsletter, please email me at GatesCactusandSucculent@gmail.com or call/text 303-986-6313 or see me at the General Meeting.

Should you wish your cacti and succulent garden to be featured as a "Member Garden of the Month" in our newsletter, please contact Jeff (per above)

GATES CSS CONTACT LIST - 2026

We welcome your comments, suggestions, or questions. You can reach out to any of the following board members by phone or send an email to gatescactusandsucculent@gmail.com

President/ Newsletter	Jeff Loew	330-986-6313
Vice President	Nicole Oceguela	909-935-6218
Secretary/ Greeter	Nicole Oceguela	909-935-6218
Treasurer	Camille Gelston	909-645-0975
Board Member	Rene Hernandez	909-875-3607
Board Member	Lyndsee Cordes	909-815-3348
Board Member	Tom Perez	951-205-5548
Board Member	Karen Roholt	951-897-2220
Past President	Phuc Huynh	909-910-9195
Mini Show Chair/Judge	Phuc Huynh	909-910-9195
Rescue Chair	Lyndsee Cordes / Phuc Huynh	909-815-3348/ 909-910-9195
Email	Gatescactusandsucculent@gmail.com	
Web	https://gatescactusandsucculentsociety.com	